



The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)
So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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An Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians # 1 — Introduction to the Book

You may open your Bibles to Colossians. I have chosen to do something a little different maybe than what is my custom. It seems like we preachers have tendencies maybe to get into grooves and have our own style and method. I would like to begin a series of messages on the book of Colossians. I will simply call it "An Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians." The

first sermon will be somewhat of an introduction to the book, and a general overview. Maybe we will get started into some of the first twelve verses there. We would like to do we like to gain a new appreciation and a new understanding for the book of Colossians.

I am not much of an expository preacher. When we talk about an exposition or an expository

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message, it is taking the Scriptures and going through a portion and exposing what is there. Some of us tend to be more topical oriented. That is where we take a topic and we roam through the whole Scriptures and find what the Bible says about this topic. They both have their place.

Nevertheless, there is a value of an expository study of a certain portion of the Bible. What we will do in the book of

Colossians is to give us what I would call the “panoramic view” — the big picture. Maybe we could call it the bird’s eye view where we stand back and look at the whole portion instead of pulling out a verse which we tend to do many times. Often we simply pull out a verse here and there and we do not really get the sense of the context, why it was written, and the context in which it was written. That is one of the benefits of an exposition. It gives

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us the bigger picture and the surrounding context.

“*An epistle.*” In Colossians at the top of the first chapter we read, “The epistle of Paul the apostle to the Colossians.” I do not know if you know what an epistle is. It is a letter. The dictionary says, “a letter, especially a long, formal and instructive letter.” Colossians 4:16 says, “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” We notice that apparently Paul had written a letter to the Laodiceans as well, which never made it into the Scriptures. We do not understand why that was, but it was obvious that he had also written a letter to them and they were to exchange these letters. Thus, we have there the word *epistle* used right there in the Scriptures.

There are other places in the Bible where the same Greek word is translated as “letters” such as 2 Corinthians 7:8. Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said, “I made you sorry with a letter.” He made them sorry with an *epistle*. It is the same word. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2, he talks about a “letter as from us.” Something about not being troubled by a letter from us. That was an epistle.

Whenever we do a study, any

sermon, any Bible study, it ought to be for what reason? It should be for the reason for us to learn — for our experience. The main purpose is for lessons that I can learn for my life today in my Christian walk. That is what Bible study is for. If we simply approach the Scriptures to swell our understanding and to merely obtain a better knowledge so we can make better arguments with our brethren or whoever, we have missed the point. Bible study is for the intent for me to grow in my Christian life and to learn what God would have for me. That is the purpose of a series of messages like this.

I would like to first of all, and probably spend most of the time with what do we have here — five questions. I would like to begin with 1) Where, and then 2) Who, and then 3) When, 4) Why and 5) How. If you ever want to do Bible study, ask yourself those five questions in the portion of Scripture that you are studying. Where did it take place? Who is it about? When, Why and How. We begin with where — where did this take place? Why it took place. The setting (in other words) would be at Colosse. We have that in verse 2. This letter is written “To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse.”

1) *Where is Colosse?* It was a city. We can find it in a good Bible atlas. Only eleven miles north of Colosse was Laodicea. As you consider that verse that I read, it seemed like they must have worked quite close together. They probably had some interchange and working affiliation. Six miles from Laodicea was Hierapolis [See Colossians 4:13]. We would say that is having churches quite close, but remember they did not have faster means of transportation the way we do. Immediately north of that, was Philadelphia. We find a number of churches fairly much in a row. A hundred miles west of there was Ephesus. There was another church. That was a hundred miles between Ephesus and Colosse.

This letter was written by Paul in Rome. Think about the miles which that letter went, and it was not by postal service, courier, or something like that. It was hand carried from Rome to Colosse. That gives a little bit of understanding of the setting where this took place. One reference that I was using a little bit to get a frame of reference, has something to say about the city of Colosse, in which the church here found itself.

“Five centuries before Christ, Colosse was hailed as the great

city of Phrygia. By Paul’s time, it was just a small town. A main reason for the change was a rise of the neighbouring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis when the trade route between Ephesus and the Euphrates valley was diverted away from Colosse. When Paul wrote the Colossians, there was a Christian congregation meeting in each of these three cities.” Here is something I thought was outstanding. “The inhabitants of Colosse were mainly Greeks and Phrygians along with an unusually large Jewish population. The area was famous for its soft wool.”

Do you remember what the Bible says about the Greeks and the Jews? Keep in mind that this is what the population of the city of Colosse largely consisted. In Corinthians 1:22, Paul had something to say about the Jews and the Greeks. 1 Corinthians 1:22–24, “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: (23) But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” We could say he had some fairly hard soil. The Jews wanted signs, the Greeks, sought after wisdom and the Gospel of Christ

was foolishness. We could say they were both a kind of hard-to-reach people.

We are looking at the city where this took place. Something else that comes into focus is Philemon. Do you remember Philemon? Paul wrote a letter to Philemon. He was an active brother in the church at Colosse. In fact, the church at Colosse met in his house, according to Philemon verse 2 which talks about “the church in thy house.” The letter to the Colossians and the letter to Philemon were delivered at the same time by the hand of Onesimus. Paul sent him back to Philemon. According to Colossians 4:17, it seems that maybe Archippus was the minister. In verse 17, “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord.” If you look at Philemon, the letter there addressed not only Philemon, but Archippus in Philemon 2, “And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house.” Therefore, it seems like the church gathered there at Colosse in Philemon’s house and possibly Archippus was the minister.

2) *The next question we want to consider is who.* Who wrote this epistle? Well, that is quite

clear. In Bible times they did not end the letter with “Sincerely, Paul,” they began the letter with who was writing. That is typical of Paul in his writings. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother” (Colossians 1:1). Therefore, the letter was written by Paul (at least it was dictated by Paul). He included Timothy in with that.

The Scripture says, “Paul, an apostle.” What is an apostle? Paul says, “an apostle of Jesus Christ.” An apostle, the dictionary says is “a delegate, an ambassador, a commissioner.” Paul was chosen by Christ to share His message — Christ’s message. Did you notice the statement “by the will of God?” Paul often called himself the apostle “by the will of God.” I think that is something outstanding. It is something for us to think about. It expresses to us a clear sense of his calling. Paul had a clear sense that this was not his mission. It was not his agenda. He had a clear understanding that God had called him to this work. He was not self appointed. He had not put himself there. Ananias, when he sent to Paul said, “Lord, I have heard by many of this man” (Acts 9:13). God however replied to Ananias, “he is a chosen vessel unto me”

(Acts 9:15). Paul somehow understood the fact that God had chosen him for this work, “by the will of God.”

What is so important about that? I think that this understanding was foundational to Paul’s confidence and the courage and the perseverance and his effectiveness. If he would not have had that, it is very unlikely that he would have had the impetus to go through all the things that he went through. It is the same for us today in the church. As Christians, when we understand that we have a clear sense of our call, and have a commission of God, that helps us not to be intimidated. It helps us to not crouch in a corner by the rebuffs which we get.

My mind went to that message that was left on our answering machine after we had sent out our last monthly evangelistic paper distribution in the community, and the tract on the truth about Halloween. A woman had left a message that she was offended with that tract on the truth about Halloween. She said that she does not push things down our throat, why should we try and push things down her throat — something like that. We could become intimidated about that, but then we remember that the church commissioned us to

do this work. What good is a church in a community if it is not sharing the truth.

Therefore, we need the sense of what Paul had, “By the will of God.” We do this by the will of God. It is not our own agenda, and we are simply trying to convince people of something that we would like to get across to them. It is not like telemarketing calls that we receive that are trying to sell their own product. We are presenting truth to people. It is God’s truth. He has commissioned us to do that.

I see another thing in that. When we have a clear sense of our call, like Paul did, it will help us to not be negligent in the work. That could be not only in evangelistic work but our work as the responsibilities that God has given us whether it is a mother in the home and mothering, and children and taking care of the home, or us as fathers in being a father in the home, or a minister, a school teacher. God has called us to this work and we have this responsibility and we need to do it. We do that with the understanding that we are doing this, “by the will of God.”

Now, that is speaking about the writer — where this letter came from. It came from Paul the apostle. It was sent to whom? It was sent “To the saints and

faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse” (Colossians 1:2), “and to the church in thy house,” (as he had told Philemon). I notice here he apologetically calls them saints. “To the saints and faithful brethren.” Maybe we do not think of the Church — of the redeemed people of God — enough in this manner — saints. What do you think of a saint? Is it some special apostle or someone you know who has climbed the ladder of Christian experience? He calls the faithful brethren in Christ saints. When we think of a saint, we think of someone who is holy and dedicated to God. Is that not what the Church should be, and what the church is? — “The saints and faithful brethren.” There are other titles in the Bible — disciples, believers and Christians.

Another thing we notice here in relation to the church at Colosse was that it was a result of the spread of the Gospel. In Acts 19 we notice this. How did the Colossians get in touch with the Gospel? In Acts 19:9, 10 it says, (this was at Ephesus) “But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. (10) And this continued by the

space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” Ephesus and those other cities Colosse and Hierapolis and Laodicea, were all a part of Asia. Therefore, during those two years when Paul was preaching here, it says here that “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus.”

Verse 26 would have a similar thought when these silversmiths had this uproar they said, “Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands.” I wonder if that did not have something to do with how the Colossians had received the Gospel.

Something we notice in Colossians 1:6 is the term (in the end of verse 5 it talks about “the truth of the gospel”). In verse 6 we read, “Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world.” The Gospel had come unto the city of Colosse. They did not go out after it. The Gospel came to them. That is something else for us to learn here. It suggests to us that someone was actively sharing and going out with the Word of God.

Some folks get the idea (maybe we can get that idea ourselves) if they want it, they can come to us and then we will share it. That however, is not necessarily the Scriptural approach. The Scriptural approach is that they went out with it. “The Gospel came unto you,” suggests that someone was carrying it out, and was actively involved. I think that the lesson for us today is that we need to take that Gospel out. Something we can learn here is that the Gospel is fruitful (in verse 6) “and bringeth forth fruit.”

Sometimes we underestimate the power of the Gospel. Remember these were Jews and Greeks. They were the ones who were looking for a sign and the ones who were seeking after wisdom and thought that the things of Christ were foolishness. That is the kind of soil in which the Gospel was working, and yet there was a church established there. Sometimes maybe we underestimate the power of the Gospel. We cannot always determine the condition of the soil. It seems like the Church back in the apostles time took it out. They did not say, “Well, this is hard soil. It is probably fruitless . . . ,” and that kind of thing.

Who wrote it? Paul wrote it. He was the apostle of Christ.

Who received the letter? The church at Colosse — the saved saints and faithful brethren. They were those who responded to the Gospel message that had come to them.

3) *When?* We get a glimpse to the answer to this question in Colossians 1:24, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you.” There we have a little bit of an idea what period of time in Paul’s life this was written. It was when he was suffering, “for you.” In Colossians 4:18, it is quite clear, “The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds.” Paul was in prison. He was imprisoned over the time that he wrote this letter. That is when it was done. Philemon 23 would suggest that Epaphras was in bonds with him at the same time. “There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 4:12 says, “Epaphras, who is one of you.” It seems like this man was a part of the church at Colosse and somehow he was in prison in Rome together with Paul.

We think about the time period in which this was written, and the situation in which it was written. We can also think about the fulfillment of the truth in Romans 8:28, if you remember what that is. “And we know that all things work together for good to them

that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” We see that in this, when we think about what came forth from the prison in which Paul was, whether it was in prison in his own house, or however that was. We notice that the Scripture in Romans 8:28 was fulfilled by Paul’s bonds. I am sure that Paul did not always understand (at least not in the beginning). His bonds seemed like something very undesirable to him. However, it was the source from which much of the doctrinal and encouraging letters were written that are recorded for us today yet. I think there is something for us to think about in relation to that. We need to remember that when life does not make any sense to us that God has a purpose, and that God is working that out to the building of His kingdom. Even though it does not make sense to us does not mean that God is not in it.

Another thing we learn here is that Paul used his time wisely. I am sure Paul was human like the rest of us. You know how we tend to get. Put yourself in his position. Maybe we could start pitying ourselves a little. We could start thinking about how terrible life is and we think about all our brethren and sisters out there free and do not need to be

in prison the way we are, and why do they not come and visit us. “I wish they would come and visit me more.” And, “I could use some encouragement.” We could squander the time away and lose the time, pitying ourselves.

Paul used his time wisely instead of pitying himself. He got busy. He thought of others. He thought of the churches. He thought about these people he had heard about. It seems like people had never even met the brethren at Colosse. Colossians 2:1 suggests that. “For as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.” It seems like maybe he did not have direct contact with them, yet he was burdened for them. He was reaching out. He thought of others. He wrote them a letter. That is the time period. That would answer the question when this took place. It seems to me that somewhere I read it was somewhere around 60 A.D.

4) *Why?* Why was this written? Colossians 1:10 shines a little light on that question, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.” I would say that 1:28 answers this question. I would consider 1:28 the key verse of the book of Colossians. “Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may

present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” I think that is the why of this letter. “That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” That is what Paul wanted. His consuming desire was and is the thing that gave him zeal. It was the motivation. He wanted to see these people grow and go on with God, grow in their Christian experience, and take the territory which God had given them for the Christian life. He simply says “he preached,” “he warned,” “he taught,” every man in all wisdom. That is what he wanted.

He encouraged them. He was encouragement. You will notice that as we go through, and get into more of a portion by portion study. We will notice how Paul encouraged them to go on and how he taught them. He taught them sound doctrine so that they would have an understanding of what it was. He warned them about false doctrine. He gave many teachings on practical Christian living in chapters 3 and 4. We will look at the breakdown of the book a little bit later.

5) *How?* How did Paul go about this? How did he approach this burden? How did he express this burden? How did he go about this to present every man perfect in Christ? That was the why and was his mission. How

did he go about it? What was the method Paul used? If you read through the book of Colossians, you will find a very positive approach, and a very positive message. It is very different from the letter to the Corinthians. The style and the approach are very different from the letter to the Corinthians. Maybe he was working with different people. Probably so. We notice his personal burden and care for them in a number of expressions that he made. First of all in 1:3, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” In verse 9, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you.” We see the positive method that Paul used here.

Continual prayer — Paul was assuring them of his continual prayer for them. There is a sense where our burden and love for our brethren and sisters is tested by how we pray for one another. Is that not true? We can become concerned and express a concern. We can become so concerned about one another and start talking to each other about each other but is that really the test of our burden? Is not the test of the genuineness of our care and concern expressed in how much we talk to God about our brother? I think so. That is what Paul was

doing. He had a love for these people and a desire and a burden that brought him to his knees in prayer — fervent prayer.

He must have spent much time in earnest prayers for this church at Colosse. Obviously he believed that God could do something in them, and for them. He believed he could not reach them nor go preach to them. He could not “straighten them out.” He was in Rome many miles away. Therefore, he prayed. He believed that prayer would make a difference, or obviously he would not have prayed. That is a very positive approach.

Verse 24 we get another glimpse into this. “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.” It seems here that Paul was suffering. Paul was in prison. Paul was not a free man at this point. Why not? He says it is because he was preaching the Gospel. It was for them that he was in chains. It was for the Church, “for the Gospel’s sake” (1 Corinthians 9:23). In other words, their faith in the Lord Jesus, and their salvation was at Paul’s expense. He realized that, but he said, “I am not pitying myself because I am suffering all this. And you know you

Colossians ought to think about what this is costing me here in prison.” No, he says, “I am rejoicing that I could,” because their faith was worth it all. That certainly expresses a positive approach.

He was in the work tirelessly. It was Paul’s care, his concern that put him there and he kept on. In 2:1 he finally tells them how he felt. “For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea.” What does conflict mean? The same Greek word *agon* [Strong’s # 73], is the same root as the word *agonize*. It is the same root (or at least very closely the same root) that is used for the word agony when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane used in Luke 22:44 “being in an agony.” This is a very similar word that is translated *conflict* here. In other words, Paul could have told them, “I am in agony for you.” That is what, his heart was. In another place he told the Galatians, “I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Galatians 4:19). Paul had a fatherly heart for these people, and that comes through. That is why this letter was written, and is how he approached it.

Finally in 4:8, his care is expressed in this, “Whom I have sent unto you for the same pur-

pose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts.” Paul finally had such a care for them (he could not go himself) that he sent someone else so that they could do two things. They could come back to him and tell him how the Colossians were faring — how they were doing — their “estate,” and also so that this person could encourage them — “comfort [their] hearts.” We see the care that flowed through this letter — his love. We can identify with that. When our children are away from home and we could not have contact with them any other way, we finally send somebody to see how they are doing. That is the kind of care that Paul had.

It seems to me that is still the first ingredient in being effective with people, whether it is parents with their children, or a minister with his congregation, or even brother to brother and sister to sister, even in all our evangelistic efforts. We know how it is. It is much better received and much more effective if people can sense that we are doing it from care and love. When we get riled up and do like Moses did and speak “unadvisedly with [our] lips” (Psalm 106:33), it is a sign that we are thinking about ourselves not the other person. Is that not the way it works? When

we get riled up and impatient is it not a sign that we are thinking about ourselves and our care for the other person has lapsed.

Another thing we notice here in how he approached this. He did it in a positive way and that is in the *commendation* that he gave. In 1:3–8, we have commendation. We notice in verse 4 he commended them “Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.” He was commending them for their faith in Jesus Christ and for the love that they had for the saints. He was bringing that to their attention and commending them for that. In verse 6 he says, “Which is come unto you . . . and bringeth forth fruit,” talking about the Gospel that came to them and it “bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it.”

He recognized that they were allowing the message of truth to change their lives. It was bearing fruit in their lives. He was commending them for that. Also, in verse 8, he was commending them for their “love in the Spirit.” In 2:5 he says, “For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.” He commended them

for their orderliness and steadfastness. They were not a church that was tossed to and fro by “every wind of doctrine” (Ephesians 4:14) that came along.

What is so good about commendation? Commendation spells approval and acceptance. That is essential to good relationships. Can you have a good relaxed relationship without approval and acceptance? Well, you say you can love that person who does not approve of you or accept you. Yes, but if you will have a close relationship, then there needs to be approval and acceptance. Commendation is one way to develop and build that. It seems to me that as I look at this, Paul started with commendation. He begins his letter that way. That laid a solid foundation for any criticism, instruction that might come later.

Criticism and instruction can very easily fall on dead soil unless there is first a relationship established of mutual acceptance and a sense of approval. Otherwise, if that is not there, criticism and instruction can very easily be read as censure. There is a big difference between sincere commendation and appreciation and flattery. We ought to understand that difference. The world flatters. They can speak

very well of you in your face and then they are doing something else behind your back. That is flattery. In contrast, commendation will not only speak well to someone’s face but they will speak well behind your back.

Commendation is important in husband and wife relationships, in parent/child relationships, and in brother to brother relationships. We lay a good foundation of appreciation of approval and acceptance through proper commendation. There is a foundation there to build.

He clearly taught the truth. I would like to underline truth. He clearly taught truth. He reaffirmed their faith in, first of all, the pre-eminence of Christ in verses 15–19. He was very positive. He clearly taught truth to them. The pre-eminence of Christ and the redemption through Christ’s blood in verses 13–23. We see truth — the ceremonial law being abolished in Christ in 2:9–15. It seems that we can learn something from that as well. In chapters 3 and 4 then, he teaches them how to live — some very positive direction of how to live. It is very practical direction on how to live and how to get along with people, how husbands, wives, children, servants, and masters ought to do. There are things that we ought to

put off and the things we ought to put on. He is giving them truth.

Yes, he does give them some warning about wrong doctrine, but he did not get into a long discourse of wrong doctrine. There is something for us to learn in that. Jesus said, “know the truth” (John 8:32). That is what Paul was doing. He gave them the truth. That is the best protection against anything wrong. We can dabble with all kinds of wrong doctrine. I know a brother who was, a few years ago, was doing a study on one of the cults. I am not sure what the intent was, but he was lost to that cult. He lost out with the Lord through it. Why do we need to study the cults and study all the counterfeits out there? It seems to me that Paul, as he wrote this letter, did not go into a big discourse of “watch out for this, this and this and study out what these people believe so that you know how to . . .” He gave them the truth. Then, they were able to determine counterfeit, whatever that counterfeit was. Study the real. That is the point.

We also notice in his positive approach that he lifted before them holy aspirations. In 1:9–12 he was anticipating something of them. I like the tone. We “pray for you . . . that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in

all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (10) That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; (11) Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; (12) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Can you feel this? Paul is saying “This is what I desire of you. This is what I like to see in you brethren. You know that I want to see you growing in your Christian experience.” He was lifting something in front of them. It was not “I am up here and you ought to get up here.” Rather, it was sort of getting underneath, encouraging and challenging them upward.

It seems to me that is something for us in our church life. We ought to be expecting something of each other. What happens to a church if the older (whether it is the parents or the ministers) sort of expect their youth to be carnal and casual and not really have a whole lot of spiritual interest? That is how they will be. There is no challenge. If that is what the church expects young people to be that is probably what they will be.

Paul did not have that kind of approach. He was expecting something of them. We need to be doing that. The church ought to hold forth sound goals, ideals, and challenges that draw us upward into the character of Christ.

What did the apostle Paul write? That is what we want to explore in the next messages. What can we learn from this? I will give you a breakdown of the book of Colossians. It can be outlined in about four sections. 1:1–12 is an introduction and is largely inspirational. It is his introduction and it is largely inspirational. In 1:13–29 we

have true doctrine, and we want to explore that in the next message. True doctrine is the doctrine of redemption and such like. In chapter 2 we have sort of the third section and that is false doctrine. You will find warnings about false doctrine. Chapters 3–4:6 teach practical Christian living. That is the fourth section. Lastly, in 4:7–18 is Christian fellowship ties. Paul is basically done with his teaching, and exhortations and it is basically what we would call Christian fellowship, and the ties that bound him together. We want to pursue that in future messages.

Scripture References

	Psalms		2 Corinthians	1:10	105
106:33	108	7:8	99	1:24	104, 107
	Luke		Galatians	1:28	105
22:44	107	4:19	107	2:1	105, 107
	John		Ephesians	2:5	108
8:32	110	4:14	109	4:8	107
	Acts		Colossians	4:12	104
9:13	101	1:1	101	4:13	100
9:15	101	1:2	99, 103	4:16	99
19:9, 10	103	1:3	106	4:17	101
19:26	103	1:3–8	108	4:18	104
	Romans	1:4	108	2 Thessalonians	
8:28	104, 105	1:6	103, 104, 108	2:2	99
	1 Corinthians	1:8	108	Philemon	
1:22–24	100	1:9	106	2	101
9:23	107	1:9–12	110	23	104

From the Previous Issue:

The Anabaptist View of Liberty of Conscience

From a message by Clair R. Weaver

Sunday, January 13, 2002

Denver Mennonite Church

Book Reprint (Continued)

One Hundred Lessons In Bible Study

LESSON 26.

Women of the New Testament.

I. Elisabeth.

1. Wife of Zacharias, and mother of John the Baptist. — Luke 1:13–17, 57–63.
2. Cousin to Virgin Mary. — Luke 1:36.

II. The Virgin Mary.

1. The annunciation. Luke 1:26–38.
2. Visits her cousin Elisabeth. Luke 1:39–56.
3. Birth of Christ. — Luke 2:1–7.
4. [For events, during the next thirty years of her life, see chapter on “Early life of Jesus.”]
5. The marriage in Cana of Galilee. — John 2:1–11.
NOTE. — This event is noted for two things; (1) It marked the “beginning of miracles”; (2) it contains the only recorded command of the virgin Mary, who directed her hearers to obey the commands of Jesus. The Catholics’ reference to the virgin Mary during their worship is idolatry, pure and simple.
6. Desires to speak with Jesus. — Matthew 12: 46–50.
7. Jesus commends her to the care of John at the crucifixion. — John 19:25–27.
8. Continued steadfast in prayer and supplication. — Acts 1:14.

NOTE. — This is the last glimpse of her life. History is silent as to the time and manner of her death.

III. Anna.

1. Record of her life. — Luke 2:36, 37.
2. Blesses Jesus in the Temple. — Luke 2:38.

IV. Mary Magdalene.

1. Rescued from sin. — Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9.
2. At the cross. — Mark 15: 40; John 19:25.
3. At the tomb. — Matthew 28:1; Mark 15:47; 16:1–9.
4. The first to see Jesus after His resurrection. — Mark 16:9.

NOTE. — A fitting reward for her devotion (John 20:11–16.) This is one of the most touching scenes recorded in the Bible.

V. Mary, the wife of Cleophas.

1. The mother of James the Less and of Joses. (Compare Matthew 27: 56, Mark 15:40, and John 10:25.)

NOTE. — Probably also a sister of Mary, mother of Jesus.

2. At the cross. — Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40.
3. At the tomb. — Matthew 28:1; Mark 15: 47; 16:1.

VI. Salome.

1. Wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John. (Compare Matthew 27:56 with Mark 15:40.)
2. Her ambitious request. — Matthew 20:20–23.
3. At the cross. — Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40.
4. At the tomb. — Mark 16: 1.

Noble Womanhood. — The little group of holy women who attended our Saviour during the dark hours of death, presents one of the brightest pages in the sacred record. While the Jews were exulting over the death of Him who came for their salvation, and the disciples had apparently forgotten the former evidences of His greatness, these noble women never faltered in their faith and devotion to Him. They sympathized with Him on the cross. They witnessed His burial in Joseph's tomb. They were the first at the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection. The disciples witnessed an empty tomb and went back home. They witnessed an empty tomb, and lingered and wept. But as their grief was the more intense over His death, their joy was the more unbounded over His resurrection; for doubt cast no veil over their Christian experiences. No crown in heaven will be more glittering than that worn by these holy women.

1. Was Jesus the only child of the Virgin Mary?
2. What was the work of Anna in the Temple?
3. Compare Mary Magdalene with the other Marys.
4. What relation existed between Elisabeth and the virgin Mary?
5. Name the women mentioned in this lesson in the order of their prominence.

LESSON 27.

Women of the New Testament. — Concluded.

VII. Joanna.

Wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and follower of Jesus — Luke 8:3.

VIII. Susanna.

A follower of Jesus. — Luke 8:3.

IX. Mary and Martha.

1. Martha receives Jesus into her home. — Luke 10:38.

2. Two ways of serving the Lord. — Luke 10:39–42.

QUESTION. — Which is preferable?

3. At the raising of Lazarus. — John 11:1–46.

4. Mary anoints the feet of Jesus. — Matthew 26:6–13; Mark 14: 3-9; John 12:1–8.

X. Herodias.

The adulterous wife of Herod Antipas. — Matthew 14:3–12; Mark 6:17–29.

XI. Sapphira.

Wife of Ananias; punished for hypocrisy. — Acts 5:1–11.

XII. Bernice.

Was with Agrippa at the time of Paul's memorable defense before him. — Acts 25:13, 23; 26: 30.

XIII. Dorcas.

1. A disciple at Joppa, noted for deeds of charity. — Acts 9:36, 39.

2. Raised to life by Peter. — Acts 9:38–41.

XIV. Mary, mother of Mark.

1. A sister to Barnabas. — Colossians 4:10.

2. Her house used for religious worship. — Acts 12:12.

XV. Rhoda.

The maid who met Peter at the door of Mary's house. — Acts 19:13.

XVI. Lydia.

1. Her conversion. — Acts 16:14, 15.

NOTE. — Said to be the first Christian convert of Europe.

2. Entertains Paul and his companions. — Acts 16:15, 40.

XVII. Damaris.

A Christian convert of Athens. — Acts 17:34.

XVIII. Priscilla.

1. Wife of Aquila, and an active Christian worker. — Acts 18:2, 18, 26.

2. Favorably mentioned in Paul's epistles. — Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19.

XIX. Phebe.

A deaconess in the apostolic church. — Romans 16:1, 2.

XX. Mary, Tryphena, Trvphosa, Persis, Julia.

Christian women mentioned in the salutations of Romans 16.

XXI. Lois, Eunice.

Grandmother and mother of Timothy. — 2 Timothy 1:5.

XXII. Euodias and Syntyche.

Members of the church at Philippi. — Philippians 4:2.

In this list of names, we omitted the names of Old Testament characters mentioned in the New; also the women of the New Testament

whose names are not recorded. Among the latter are Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:22, 23) raised by Christ; the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:26) who gave such a bright evidence of her faith; the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9), who showed themselves worthy of their father; and others.

It is worthy of note that the Christian women mentioned in the New Testament occupied the same position in the Gospel service that the Christian woman does in the Christian household — as the helpmeet of man. The woman's sphere is distinctly visible, and it is clear that this sphere is neither lordship nor slavery. Save in the capacity of leadership and in propounding Gospel faith, we find woman fully as active as man. There was but one place where the "woman's rights" question was clearly visible, and that was in the Corinthian church. The apostle put an effective quietus to the question there. In other places, where woman recognized her sphere of labors, she was encouraged to the work, and in turn proved an encouragement to keepers and feeders of the flock.

1. What lessons can we learn by drawing a contrast between Herodias and Priscilla?
2. Was there a woman preacher among the women mentioned in the Now Testament?
3. What lesson is taught by Paul's reference to Lois and Eunice?
4. What was the, special work of Phebe?
5. What are the advantages of man and woman working side by side in Christian work, over man working alone, or woman working alone?

Children's Book Reprint

The Little Woodchopper

by Mrs. Mary M. Sherwood

Left alone by his brothers in the deep black forest of Germany, William turns for help to the one and only true Friend he had come to know and love, the Lord Jesus Christ. Read this heart- touching story and you will see the marvelous way the

Lord works in the life of one of His own.

One morning, shortly after his father's death, poor young William awakes in the middle of the forest, to find himself completely deserted through the trickery of his five heartless brothers. Left alone in the midst

of strange surroundings, William turns for help to the One he had come to know as his Saviour and Friend. After two narrow escapes, he and his faithful dog, Caesar, find a lone cottage on the edge of the wood where they make a remarkable discovery. Written for ages 7 through 10, this is a sweet story illustrating how “His ways are past finding out.” (Romans 11:33.)

Long ago a woodchopper by the name of Robert H., and his six sons, lived at the border of a large dense forest. William, the youngest son, a boy of five, was left to himself, but was very mature for his years of hardships. His mother had died soon after his birth, and his father and brothers, who were much older than he, were engaged in chopping wood in the forest.

The owner of the forest land selected the trees and charged a small fee for the privilege of cutting them. William’s father, who was an industrious man, had always made a good living by chopping and selling the wood. When the sons grew up, they were able to handle the ax as well as their father, and prosperity increased yearly in the old log cabin.

Were those who lived there happy? Ah, no: *One* thing was

lacking to make this family really happy. The woodchopper was altogether unconcerned about his soul’s salvation, and never spoke to his children about God, or ever thought of taking them where they could hear the Word of God. Schools were very poor then, and few people could read or write; so the sons were allowed to grow up in utter ignorance, their only desire being to earn money and have an easy life.

“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Mark 8:36.

This condition of things was so much sadder, since the father in his young years had been shown the way of salvation by his own dear God-fearing mother, and had heard many earnest words from her lips. But for many years he had not thought about the Lord Jesus, the salvation of his soul or his dear mother’s teachings, till God Himself brought him to think about these things through a serious accident.

One day while he was chopping down a tree it fell unexpectedly to the ground, just in the direction where the old man was standing. Although he quickly stepped aside, one of the strong branches struck him to the ground, injuring him so badly that his sons had to carry him

home. William, who was helping his brothers to gather the dry sticks and bind them into bundles, was looking on when the accident happened, and, crying aloud, he followed the sad procession home. When their father became conscious he complained of intense pain. The older sons bound him up as well as they knew how, and leaving him alone with William, they went back to the woods where they stayed for a week.

The poor man suffered a great deal, and the thought of death came with great power over his soul. The sins of his whole life seemed to awaken and condemn him. One thing especially troubled him much—the thoughts about his poor mother, whom he had secretly left many years before, and about whom he had never bothered since. What might have become of the poor and lonesome widow? Was she still alive, or had she died of a broken heart, sorrowing over her prodigal son?

“A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.” Proverbs 10:1.

These were sad days for the old woodchopper. The troubles of his soul were harder to bear than the pain of his body. With fear, yes, horror, he thought of

the dark, never-ending eternity he was going to enter. What his mother had so long before told him came back to his memory in living power. He knew he was a wicked and lost sinner, who righteously deserved eternal damnation.

Deep sobs constantly came from his burdened heart, and the tears ran down his sunken cheeks in streams. No one was able to speak a word of comfort to him. His elder sons thought only of themselves, and left the sick man to his fate; they even laughed about his soul-troubles and mocked him when he wept.

William, who was now nine years of age, clung to his unfortunate father with a tender love. For hours he would sit at his bedside, and did all that he was able to do according to his little strength. But he was not able to comfort him in his great distress, as he knew nothing of the Lord Jesus, the only One able to bring comfort at such an hour.

Many weeks passed thus in fear, and sorrow. Many times William heard his father sob,

“O God, be merciful to me a sinner!”

Once in a while William would slip away, and fall on his knees and entreat the Lord for grace and mercy for his dear father.

Then his father began to tell

him what he had once heard from his dear mother about the wonderful love of God and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son. He would tell as well as he could remember — for he had no Bible — the story of the birth of Jesus, His life and His works here on earth, and of His death on the cross. Later he told him of the creation of the world, of Adam and Eve and the fall of man; of Cain and Abel, of the flood, and of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, and of Moses and Joshua. William listened with the closest attention, and the words of his

suffering father made a deep impression on the tender heart of the boy.

By and by a change came over the sick man; the expression of his face became quiet and peaceful; at times a happy smile crept over his haggard face while he would tell of Jesus and His love; and his eyes would beam with joy. William was very happy to see this change in his father, although he did not understand the cause.

“O happy day, that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Saviour and my God;
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.
Happy day; happy day! -
When Jesus washed my sins away.”

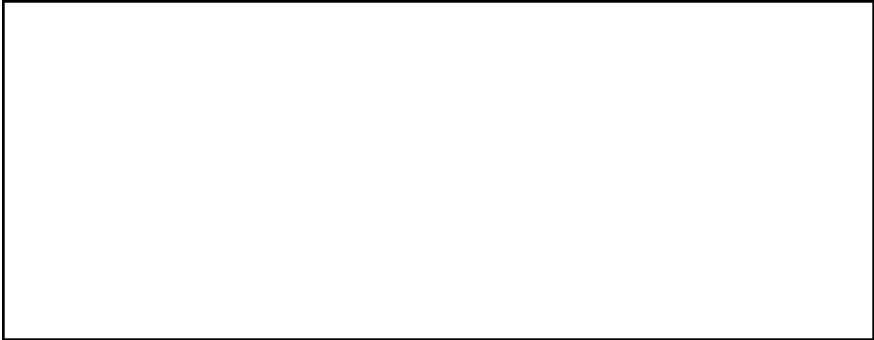
FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS

42. God has no comforting words for the idle, do-nothing, indifferent church member.

Hear the words of the prophets: “Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion” (Amos 6:1). Christ has a similar message, though expressed in different words (Matthew 25:24–30), for the man who fails to put to use the talents which God has given him. Going through the Bible

from beginning to end, we find no words of comfort for the Christian professor who finds, no use for the Church but nominal membership. Not what we can get out of our Christian religion and of the Church, but what we can put into it, should be our chief concern. The “minimum Christian,” at least in most cases, is no Christian at all.

*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6).*



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